

The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of two people in business attire shaking hands. The person on the left is wearing a light-colored suit jacket, and the person on the right is wearing a brown blazer. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office environment.

7 BIG IDEAS TO WIN THE TALENT WAR

GLOSSARY

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INTRODUCTION

HR and Talent Acquisition teams face more pressure than ever as we enter 2025 to source and retain top talent. The labor market has undergone a seismic shift over the past few years, driven by technological advancements, skills shortages, and changing worker expectations.

In 2022, when we first wrote this eBook, we talked about historic unemployment rates under 4%. Three years later, we wanted to revisit and reimagine it for 2025. While the landscape has shifted, the challenges remain just as urgent. Today, we're seeing pockets of severe talent shortages across critical industries like technology, healthcare, manufacturing, renewable energy, and more. Job seekers have more options than ever, and employers need to work even harder to stand out.

The strategies of yesterday no longer work. While many organizations still lean heavily on the outdated "Post and Pray" approach—posting jobs and hoping for applicants, please God I deserve them! That might've worked back when unemployment hit double digits during the Great Recession, but those days are long gone. Today it'd be like using a flip phone to make a TikTok... is that even possible?

This eBook is designed to be a quick-hitter—packed with actionable ideas you can test today to elevate your hiring results. While there's no silver bullet, applying the right mix of strategies can dramatically improve both the quantity and quality of talent flowing into your organization. The key? Be ready to test, measure, and pivot.





CHAPTER 1: UPGRADE YOUR TALENT TECH STACK

If you're using a legacy HCM recruiting module, you might be running a talent tech stack that simply can't keep up. Not because these systems are broken—they do exactly what they were built to do: manage high-volume hiring efficiently. However, they aren't designed to be nimble or cutting-edge when it comes to talent attraction.

The good news? Every major HCM provider integrates with innovative add-on tools for recruiting, sourcing, and candidate engagement. These tools can make your tech stack more competitive and responsive.

So, where should you start? With your vendors.

“We need more applicants for [specific roles]. What integrated recruiting technology solutions can you recommend to help us attract more talent?”

Push your vendor to answer.

Follow up with: “And what else?” Then, dig deeper:

- ➔ **Who in our industry uses your system best? Can we connect with their team?**
- ➔ **How can we optimize your platform to improve candidate attraction and conversion?**

Your vendors know their products' capabilities better than anyone, but they won't proactively reach out with solutions tailored to you. You need to lean in, ask the right questions, and build a smarter tech stack that works for your hiring challenges.

CHAPTER 2: BUILD A MODERN EMPLOYEE REFERRAL ENGINE

Organizations typically fill positions in three main ways:

40-60% INTERNAL HIRES	20-40% EMPLOYEE REFERRALS	20-30% EXTERNAL HIRES
You post a position and someone already working for you takes that job and now you have to backfill their position.	The second, or sometimes first, largest bucket of hires in every organization are employee referrals.	We spend most of our time on this, the smallest bucket of hires.

Despite referrals being a proven source for high-performing, long-term hires, most organizations invest very little budget or effort into optimizing their referral programs. We'd rather spend the money on our new shiny objects!

The key to building a modern referral engine? Automation. Tools like Jobvite, RolePoint, and Teamable make it seamless for employees to share jobs and tap their networks for leads. These systems send reminders, shareable links, and personalized prompts automatically—ensuring your referral program runs constantly instead of gathering dust.

Pro Tip: Rethink referral incentives. Instead of a delayed bonus (e.g., \$1,000 after six months), reward behaviors that drive results:

- \$20 for a referral's contact info
- \$100 when the referral interviews
- A larger bonus upon hire

Immediate rewards encourage employees to act quickly and keep referrals flowing into your pipeline.

CHAPTER 3

I'LL COME TO YOU!

If you aren't using text messaging to reach candidates, you're missing a huge opportunity. Studies consistently show that texts get 7-10x the response rates of email, phone calls, or InMails—across all industries, job levels, and demographics.

The best outreach strategy uses a mix of communication methods, deployed simultaneously:



TEXT MESSAGE: Hi [Name], this is [Recruiter] at [Company]. I just sent you an email about a new opportunity I think you'd love. Check it out and let me know what you think!



EMAIL: Hi [Name], I came across your background and think you'd be a great fit for [Role]. We're looking for people with [specific skills or experience]. I've attached the details and a short video from our hiring manager about what makes this role exciting. Let me know your thoughts!



PHONE CALL: Hi [Name], it's [Recruiter] from [Company]. I just sent you an email and text about an opportunity I'd love to discuss. Let me know the best way to connect!

This multi-channel approach ensures your message gets seen—and responded to.

CHAPTER 4

MINE THE GOLD YOU ALREADY HAVE

Every year, companies spend thousands attracting applicants. Again, we love new shiny objects! Yet, they rarely revisit past candidates who already expressed interest.

Every single organization in the world can do a better job at using their own internal resume database of candidates. Yes, even you! Your database has thousands, if not millions, of candidates who have gone through your process and in a way have said, “I love you! I want to work for you! Please pick me!” We then let them sit in there and die.

Why do we do this?

- “If we didn’t pick them the first time, they must be crap.”
- “Our system sucks at searching our database, so we simply can’t find them.”
- “They applied a year ago, they probably aren’t interested any longer.”
- “They applied three years ago and didn’t have enough experience.”
- “Our hiring managers want to see ‘fresh’ candidates.’

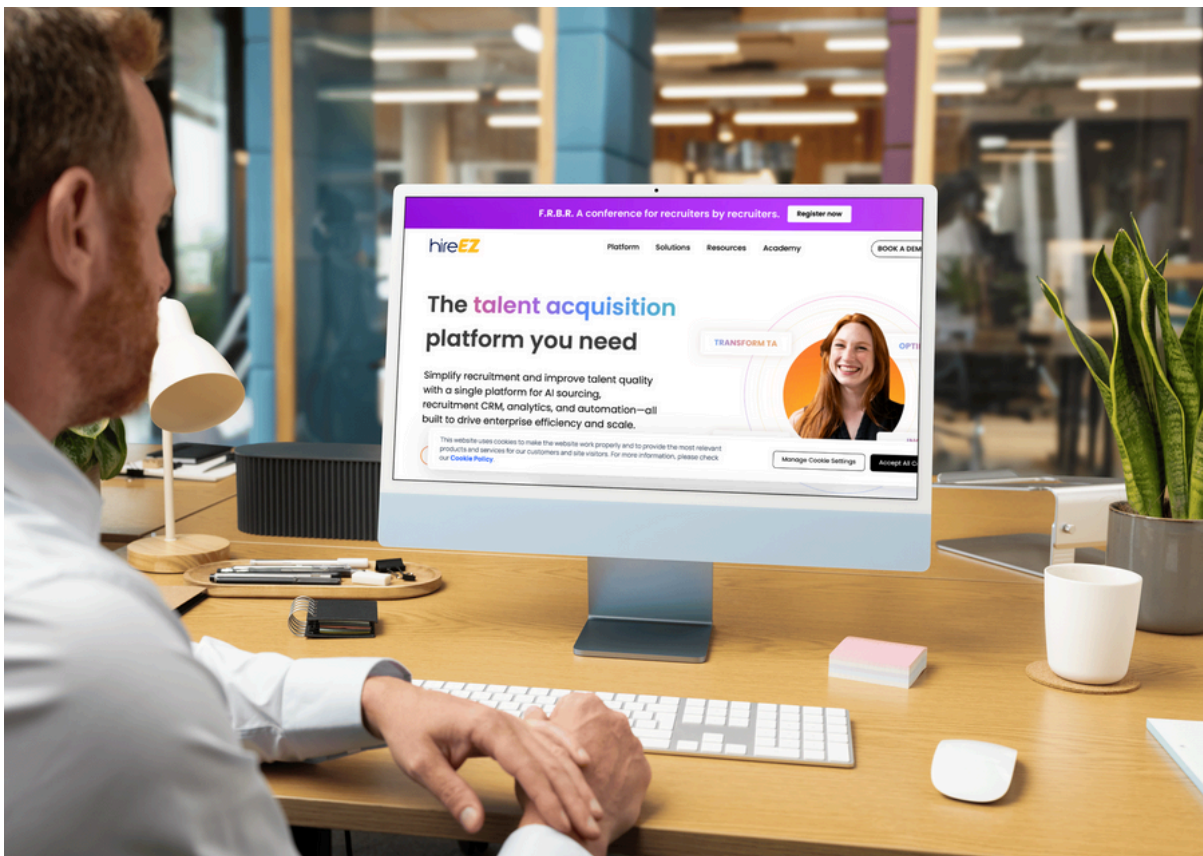


If you can agree with any of the above statements, you are the problem!

If you're ignoring your database, you're wasting a valuable resource. The candidates in your system may be:

- Former silver medalists—who were almost hired the first time
- Experienced applicants who weren't ready for a role when they first applied
- People who still want to work for you

Candidate Rediscovery tools like Eightfold AI, HireEZ, and SeekOut can identify top matches within your database, update their information, and re-engage them for current roles. Before spending on external outreach, mine the gold you already have.



CHAPTER 5

RETHINK APPLICANT VOLUME

The obsession with applicant quantity over quality hurts recruiters more than it helps. It also haunts me in my nightmares. So that's great! Too many great candidates are eliminated early in the process due to unconscious bias, arbitrary filters, or rigid requirements.

Instead of aiming for more applicants, focus on better applicants. Partner with hiring managers to streamline must-have qualifications and reduce barriers for strong candidates who might be overlooked.

QUANTITY	QUALITY
High Volume Hiring: 500 applicants, 10 interviewed, 2 hired	Targeted Quality Hiring: 100 applicants, 25 interviewed, 5 hired

Shifting the focus to quality over quantity doesn't just improve your hiring outcomes—it also saves time and resources. Screening hundreds of unqualified applicants wastes hours that could be spent engaging top talent. By narrowing your applicant pool with strategic targeting, you'll uncover hidden gems who might otherwise get lost in a flood of resumes. Plus, when hiring managers and recruiters collaborate to define realistic qualifications, you're more likely to attract candidates who truly align with the role and the company's needs. It's not about casting the widest net—it's about casting the right one.

Because let's face it: sorting through 500 resumes to find 2 hires is like binge-watching a terrible show hoping for a good ending—it's just not worth it.

CHAPTER 6 MAXIMIZE YOUR JOB BOARD ROI

Job boards aren't dead—far from it. But in today's competitive hiring landscape, simply posting an ad and walking away won't cut it. Platforms like Indeed, LinkedIn, and niche industry boards remain valuable tools, but only if approached strategically. By optimizing your job postings and analyzing the results, you can turn job boards into a powerful part of your recruitment strategy.

Job boards require a strategic approach to deliver results. Clear, engaging job descriptions that avoid jargon and include salary transparency can significantly boost application rates. Glassdoor's 2023 Candidate Insights Report revealed that job listings with salary information receive 30% more applicants.

Paid sponsorships are also worth the investment, particularly for high-priority or hard-to-fill roles. Hey I know, just throw money at it! *A recent HR Tech study found that a \$100 investment in sponsorships can increase views by 75%.*

Additionally, leveraging data is essential to refine your efforts. I'm getting ahead of myself and will focus on this in the next chapter, but analyzing metrics like time-to-hire, cost-per-applicant, and conversion rates allows you to identify which platforms produce the best results.

For example, LinkedIn often delivers faster hires for specialized roles, while Indeed may be better suited for high-volume positions. By focusing on platforms that offer the highest ROI—whether that's in terms of hires, better applicants, or faster time-to-fill—you can maximize the impact of your job board strategy and connect with the right talent more effectively.

LINKEDIN	INDEED
Delivers faster hires for specialized roles	Better suited for high-volume positions



CHAPTER 7 IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE IT, YOU CAN'T FIX IT

In talent acquisition, data is your greatest ally. You can't improve what you don't measure, and the most successful TA teams know that tracking key metrics is the foundation for making smarter decisions and driving better results. Measuring performance allows you to uncover inefficiencies, refine strategies, and prove the impact of your efforts.

Some of the most critical metrics to track include:

SOURCE OF HIRE	TIME TO FILL	QUALITY OF HIRE
Understanding where your best candidates are coming from—whether it's job boards, employee referrals, or social media—helps you invest in the right channels and cut those that don't deliver.	Knowing how long it takes to fill critical roles is essential for identifying bottlenecks in your hiring process and reducing delays.	Measuring how well new hires meet expectations provides insights into whether your sourcing, screening, and interview processes are truly effective

By analyzing these metrics, you gain a clear picture of what's working and what's not. For example, if your data shows that employee referrals consistently lead to higher-quality hires with faster time-to-fill, you can prioritize strengthening your referral program. On the flip side, if a particular job board delivers high applicant volume but poor conversion to hires, it might be time to reevaluate that investment.

Tracking these numbers isn't just about optimization—it's about creating a hiring process that's agile, scalable, and aligned with your organization's goals. When you let data guide your decisions, you'll be better equipped to adapt to changing talent market conditions and outperform the competition.



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